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## THE TRANSYLVANIAN ORTHODOX CONFSSIONAL EDUCATION DURING THE AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN DUALISM

**Preamble:** In Transylvania, during the modern historical period, education and school have constituted the subject of thorough research and analysis, starting from the premise that education has been a key factor in the development of human society (*Istoria învățământului din România. Compendiu*, 1971). In the following pages, we will focus on the Romanian confessional education during the Austrian-Hungarian dualism (1867-1918)<sup>2</sup>.

### The Romanian school – targeted by the authorities

As soon as the 1867 circumstantial dualist union had been signed, the Hungarian Government began to openly meddle into the affairs concerning the Romanian education. Thus, the next year the heatedly debated “Act XXXVIII” (known as the “Eötvös Act”) was promulgated, which reiterated the right of each Church to set up and maintain their own educational institutions; the conditions for this included the State’s continuing control, compulsory education for children aged between 6 and 12, compulsory attendance of repetition classes until the age of 15 for those who had failed to pass the class, compulsory completion of specialized courses by teachers, etc. The Act also specified the conditions to be met by school buildings, and outlined the subject matters and set the length of the school year (*Istoria românilor VII/1*, 2003). Thus, in addition to

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<sup>2</sup> The situation of the Orthodox confessional education in Transylvania during Austrian-Hungarian dualism was the subject of several studies; see: Onisifor Ghibu, *Școala românească din Ungaria în anul 1911*, Sibiu, 1912, p. 32; Idem, *Viața și organizația bisericească și școlară în Transilvania și Ungaria*, București, 1915, p. 206; Enea Hodoș, *Cercetări cu privire la trecutul școalelor confesionale ortodoxe românești din Ardeal*, Sibiu, 1944, 212 p.; Vasile Popeangă, *Școala românească din Transilvania în perioada 1867-1918 și lupta sa pentru unire*, București, 1974, p. 221; Traian Valentin Poncea, *Lupta românilor din Transilvania împotriva legislației învățământului în timpul dualismului austro-ungar*, in rev. „Marisia”, Târgu Mureș, XI-XII, 1981-1982, p. 279-287; Vasile Pop, *Contribuție documentară privind istoria școlilor românești din Transilvania*, in rev. „Marisia”, Târgu Mureș, XIII-XIV, 1984, pp. 185-205; Stelian Mândruț, *Învățământul comunal elementar din Transilvania între anii 1867-1918*, in rev. „Crisia”, Oradea, XIX, 1989, p. 265-287; Liviu Maior, *Politica școlară a guvernelor maghiare față de români (1900-1914)*, în „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie”, Cluj-Napoca, XXX, 1990-1991, pp. 123-138; Ioan Lupaș, *Istoria bisericească a românilor ardeleni*, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, p. 277; Valeria Soroștineanu, *Școala confesională ortodoxă în viziunea mitropolitului Ioan Meșianu*, în vol. *Mitropolitul Ioan Meșianu (1828-1916)*, Zărnești, 2004, pp. 14-45.

confessional schools, the Act also provided for another two categories of educational institutions, namely state schools and communal schools, where the teaching language was to be Hungarian. The communal schools, which also depended on the State, were to be entirely supported by village communities; if the functioning requirements (much too restrictive though) were not fulfilled within six years from the promulgation of the Act, the Government could have them closed down; such a summons, issued by Agoston Trefort, the Minister of Cults and Public Education on 23 February 1873, requested higher “standards” in confessional schools without, however, any financial support from the State (Lazăr, 2002).

Other laws followed. Thus, on 3 May 1875, Emperor Francis Joseph I sanctioned “Act XXXII concerning the retirement of teachers and kindergarten teachers” by which the parishioners and their teachers were obliged to contribute to the pension fund. On 10 June 1876, another education law (“Act XXVIII”) was promulgated by which the King’s inspectors from the county capitals would have the task of checking the curricula, the textbooks and the teaching material used in all types of schools. They would also have the task of “confiscating any books and teaching means that were banned by the regime”; in 1877 alone 47 school textbooks and atlases were banned (Lazăr, 2002). Thus, the fate of the Romanian confessional education was left at the mercy of the authorities since, as Archpriest Ioan Papiu of Deva complained in 1878, the King’s inspector Réthi Lajos “has never seen a darker spot on the school map of this county, Hunedoara, than the Romanian Grammar School in Brad and the Frontier Guards’ Capital School in Dobra” (Hodoş, 1944).

Since the concept of a Hungarian unitary state, sanctioned through the dualist transaction, could not be put into practice without the Magyarization of the cohabiting ethnic groups, the decisions adopted through the 1879 “Bill XVIII” constituted the beginning a long series of denationalizing legislative dispositions. For a start, the law mentioned above set the teaching of the Hungarian language as a compulsory subject matter in all the pedagogical and people’s schools where the teaching language was not Hungarian; all the teachers who did not know Hungarian were obliged to learn it in the course of four years and then sit a qualification examination. Despite the protests, the bill was passed. Moreover, in 1883, another denationalizing law was passed which introduced the compulsory study of Hungarian in the Church-supervised schools as well, stipulating that the teachers had to know Hungarian; any subsidies from Romania were suspended. Starting from 1891, in the same arbitrary manner, Hungarian was introduced as the conversational language (Mândruţ, 1989). The abuses were countless.

In 1893, under Act XXVI, the State tried regulating teachers’ salaries; at the time, in compliance with a circular issued by the Archdiocesan Consistory of Sibiu in 1884, the salaries were set according to the number of families in the “ecclesiastical communes”. The principle was simple: where there were at least 90 families, the teacher’s salary was set to 300 florins. However, the Government was laying another trap: in case the village community could not afford to pay the teacher the legal salary, he had to appeal to the State for help and thus the State could interfere in the affairs of the schools in administrative and teaching matters.

Other attempts at “reformation” which were, in fact, aimed at dissolving the Romanian schools are linked to the name of Count Albert Apponyi, Minister of Cults and Public Education. Thus, in 1907 it was decided that the minimum salary of a teacher, regardless of the type of education where he taught, would be of up to 1,000 crowns, with the possibility of additional seniority raise every five years. However good as it may seem, the law was nothing but an even tougher policy of denationalization since just a few Romanian elementary schools were able to finance themselves from their own resources; that is why most of them had been replaced by communal or state schools. The most difficult task, however, imposed on Romanian teachers was to instill in students a sense of attachment to the Hungarian homeland and to develop in them the awareness of belonging to the Hungarian nation (Mândruț, 1989). The oath that the teachers had to take as “public officers” read as follows: “I, ... [full name, *author’s note*], ordinary teacher, do swear on the living God that I will be unwaveringly faithful to His Majesty, my apostolic king, to my Hungarian country and to its Constitution, that I will safeguard that country’s laws, the legal customs and the legal regulations issued by the authorities. In addition, in what concerns the duties entailed by my teaching office, I will always fulfill them conscientiously, faithfully and accurately, and I will educate the youth entrusted in my care in the spirit of love for their Hungarian country. So help me God” (Triteanu, 1919).

Under the circumstances, on 27 September 1907, metropolitan bishop Ioan Mețianu sent a circular to all the Orthodox Protopresbyterial Offices in Transylvania which said that “although by the coming into effect of the article of law from Act XXVII of the current year 1907 concerning the teachers’ salaries, the situation of our ecclesiastical communes in their capacity as supporters of confessional people’s schools has become very difficult, especially with regard to the raising of the teachers’ salaries, if we understand that School is integral part of the Church, that for us School and Church are the most valuable treasures which preserved and sustained us in the past and will preserve and sustain us in the future, if we ourselves are willing to maintain and preserve them, then any sacrifice is welcomed so that we can bequeath them to our descendants as precious heritage. We are many, and if we have a strong will to sacrifice as much as we can for our union with the people and among ourselves, beginning with archpriests and the other clergy to protopresbyters, teachers and priests, other public and private clerks, lawyers, traders, industrialists, landowners and other leading men, for a contribution to the salaries required by the law, then, at least in the larger parishes, we will be able to support our confessional schools without any help from the State”<sup>3</sup>. The numbers are edifying: for instance, in the county of Hunedoara, after the promulgation of Act XXVII in 1907, in just a few months 39 Orthodox schools were either closed down or transformed into communal schools.; by 1911, 134 schools had been dissolved, and the county’s illiteracy rate was 79%, so in 1912, only 90 people’s schools still existed.

Thus, the majority of the measures that had been taken by the Hungarian Government were aimed directly at the Romanian educational system. For example, in what concerns the teachers’ salaries, the 1868 “Eötvös” Act stipulated a minimum salary of 300 florins

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<sup>3</sup> National Archives of the County of Hunedoara, “Orăștie Orthodox Protopope’s Office” fund, 1/1907, ff. 1-2

which was to be obtained from the so-called “cultural tax” set to maximum 5% of the tax due to the State by each commune. The distribution of this quota was done in an arbitrary manner, by household, in equal sums, without taking into considerations whether a family could afford to pay or not. In 1873, pay raises granted every five years were introduced. In the same year, the Sibiu Consistory requested that the payments be made from the pay offices of the communes, under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan’s Office; on 10 May 1883, the following salary bracket was approved: a) 150 florins for the teachers from the ecclesiastical communes having up to 50 families; b) 200 florins where there were between 50 and 70 families; c) 250 florins where there were between 70 and 90 families; d) 300 florins (the minimum pay required by the State) where there were more than 90 families. In the next two decades, the minimum salary reached 600 crowns. By raising the minimum salary to 1,000 crown, the 1907 Apponyi Act directly hurt the Romanian elementary schools. Under the circumstances, very many schools, both Orthodox and Greek-Catholic (Romanian Church United with Rome), were classified as “inappropriate” and consequently were either closed down or transformed into state schools (Hodoş, 1944; Triteanu, 1919). The destructive activity of the Hungarian schools inspectors Károly Dénes from Deva and Benkő András from Brad (Hunedoara county) is representative for the “Apponyi era” as in just three years (1907-1910) they closed down no fewer than 135 primary schools; during the same period, in Deva’s neighboring protopope’s district, the number of the Orthodox people’s schools dropped from 22 to 12 (Micu, 1913).

#### **The confessional education during the “Great War”**

The beginning of the First World War, and especially the disastrous withdrawal of the Romanian army in the autumn-winter of 1916, were regarded by the authorities as a good occasion to definitively settle the issue of the confessional education. As a first measure, 357 teachers were mobilized and sent to the front while other 158 were deemed fit. Thus, more than two thirds, i.e. 515 of the existing 763 teachers, were sent to sacrifice their lives for a cause that was not theirs. Many of those who stayed at home had to face “sensational” trials and, on the basis of false accusations, were charged with “treason” and sentenced to long years in prison or to go into exile in the counties of Sopron, Sombor and Becicherecu Mare (Matei, 1915). For instance, teacher Romul Munteanu from Glodghileşti (Hunedoara county) was convicted because he spread among the villagers the idea that the high taxes that they were paying would be lower if Transylvania were united with Romania. Another teacher from the county of Hunedoara, Nicolae Voina from Vaidei, was imprisoned in Sibiu because he allegedly said before the pupils at the festivity ending the school year 1915/1916: “May God help us so that you won’t need it [the Hungarian language, *author’s note*] the coming year!”; in addition, because “he shares Dacian-Roman feelings”, he was seen by the authorities as being “incompatible with the quality of a citizen of the Hungarian State.” During the trial that took place in Deva in January 1918, he boldly stated that “in less than one year we will be able to speak Romanian.” For “acts against the State”, “infidelity towards the State” or “unpatriotic attitude” were also convicted the teachers Ioan Moga from Vinerea (now located in the county of Alba), Ioan Brâncoveanu from Hunedoara and the entire family of the deceased teacher Gheorghe Şandor from Lupeni (Lupu, 2008).

The second measure, taken in 1917 at the initiative of the same Minister Apponyi, intended to create a so-called “cultural area”, which meant the State was to take over the Romanian schools located at the southern and eastern borders of Transylvania (Bistrița-Năsăud, Trei Scaune, Brașov, Făgăraș, Târnava Mare, Sibiu, Hunedoara and Caraș-Severin); instead, 1,600 primary state school and 800 kindergartens were going to be set up. A “special commissioner” was appointed now, Emil Horvath Petrichevich, who was in charge of supervising the nationalization of the schools. What is more, the expropriation of the school buildings in the above-mentioned “area” was decreed, and many teachers of Hungarian nationality were sent to the “Carpathian line” to take the Romanian elementary schools into the care of the State (Micu, 1913; Triteanu, 1919; Ghibu, 1915; Păcurariu, 2008). It was only the day of the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1918, which had been prepared with the help of many Orthodox teachers (Lupu, 2008; Șuiaga, 1993), that put an end to these arbitrary measures and the attempts at denationalization.

### **Directions for the development of the Romanian education system**

Despite the historical-political context that was completely unfavorable for the development of the Romanian education system, and through it, the cultivation of the national feeling, the Orthodox confessional school had an upward dynamics during the years of the Austrian-Hungarian dualism; largely credited with this development are Andrei Țaguna (1848-1873), Miron Romanu (1874-1898) and Ioan Mețianu (1898-1916), high ranking clergy from Sibiu.

Thus, through *The Instruction to Teachers from the Normal and Capital Schools from the Metropolitan Church of the Romanians of Greek-Eastern Religion from Hungary and Transylvania* from 1869, metropolitan bishop Andrei Țaguna acknowledged the changing of the name of the old school “districts” with that of “circles”, and listed in a circular the subjects of study (indicating the number of course hours) which were to be taught in the four classes of the people’s schools: Religion, Mother Tongue (Reading, Writing, ABC and grammar), Hungarian (ABC and grammar), Physics and Natural History, Geography and History, Civic Rights and Duties, Calculation, Economics, Singing and Gymnastics. The teaching courses, together with the additional courses (optional courses of Hungarian) followed the same “circular” pattern. The topics for discussion, set in advance and thoroughly prepared, corroborated with the reports of the schools inspectors, presented a detailed picture of the educational system from a “circle”.

The schoolteachers’ reunions were linked with these courses in their purpose, but in a different organization form, with a large number of participants and a wider range of activities. Their purpose was to defend the general interests of schoolteachers and their professional development. Under the circumstances of a harsher Austrian-Hungarian dualist regime, which was reluctant to any Romanian actions of this kind, the schoolteachers’ reunions “survived” for two decades only, from 1878 to 1898.

In an attempt to give elementary education the best administrative-judicial support possible, numerous regulations were prepared during consistorial meetings, which the

archdiocesan Printing Press made available to Romanian teachers as brochures<sup>4</sup>. For instance, in order to lower the illiteracy rate, the “Ministerial Ordinance” of 24 September 1870, approved in the meeting of the Orthodox consistory in the autumn of the same year, once again drew the priests’ and the teachers’ attention to the issue of setting up “schools” for adults, regardless of their age and sex, providing for assessment examinations in February- March. Although brought up again in the synods of 1872 and 1873, these dispositions “remained entirely dead letter” (Lupaş, 1995). The graduation examination at the end of primary school was introduced in 1908, the educational institution having the right to issue school certificates (Borza, G., Borza, C., Borza-Popescu, M., 2007).

Among the measures meant to encourage and improve the confessional education we can count the measure to interdict school abandonment and absenteeism; a circular issued by protopope Romul Crainic of Dobra (Hunedoara county) in 1887, required that “no child should miss school without a legal reason”. Also, in 1911, the Sibiu Consistory decided that each Orthodox confessional school should choose a spiritual patron of its own, and on the occasion of his/her celebration a religious-cultural festival should be organized that would have moral and educational purposes. In the same year, upon the intervention of the Government from Budapest, the so-called “Festival of birds and trees” was introduced, in connection with the annual spring trips which the pupils were encouraged to take in the surroundings. From 1915, a few school canteens and cooperatives began to be set up (Ghibu, 1915).

In order to improve the quality of education, people’s libraries were opened in many schools (Lupu, 2008). Then, in the spirit of the 1868 Act, the state authorities requested that the leadership of the communes provide appropriate places for school gardens<sup>5</sup>; Minister Trefort renewed these dispositions in 1872 and 1875. However, the issue of these gardens, present since 1857 on the agenda of the Consistory of Sibiu (and rediscussed in the meeting from 21 February 1876) could not be resolved rapidly and practically. Although the schoolteachers who possessed no specialized knowledge were urged to attend practical courses taught by qualified teachers, and to read the schools “papers” regularly, in most cases these guidelines were not put into practice. Hikes, trips, cultural festivals, theatrical and choral performances – many of which benefited from the support of local singing reunions – complemented the range of measures meant to increase the attractiveness and quality of the educational process (Lupu, 2008).

In their capacity as authors, both metropolitan bishop Andrei Şaguna and his collaborators struggled to raise the standards of the textbooks, many of which had been written before 1867: *Romanian ABC* by Sava Popovici-Barcianu (1851), *Biblical History for Schoolchildren* by Sava Popovici-Barcianu (1851), *Romanian Grammar* by Sava Popovici-Barcianu (1852), *Conversation Book and German-Romanian Vocabulary* by Sava Popovici-Barcianu (1853), *Arithmetic with Numbers* by Visarion Roman (1855), *German ABC for*

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<sup>4</sup> Each year, the *Calendars of the Archiepiscopate of Sibiu* used to publish at the end the list of school statutes, regulations and instructions in force (printed as brochures) as well as the selling price (in crowns).

*Romanian Schools* by Sava Popovici-Barcianu (1857), *The Teacher and the People* by Atanasiu Marienescu (1859), *History of Austria* by Visarion Roman (1858), *Church History* (2 volumes) by Andrei Şaguna (1860), *A Concise Guide for the ABC* by Zaharia Boiu (1862), *Calculation for People's Schools* by Ioan Popescu (1864), *Romanian Short-Hand* by Dimitrie Răcuciu (1864), *Reading Book* by Zaharia Boiu (1865), *Romanian Grammar* by Nicolae Mihălţeanu (1865), *Practical Knowledge about the Cultivation of School Gardens* by Pavel Vasici (1867), *Elements of World and Patriotic History for Romanian People's Schools* by Zaharia Boiu (1869), *Anthropologic Catechism* by Pavel Vasici (1870), *The Geography of the Countries under the Hungarian Crown in Connection with the Fundamental Lines of World Geography for the Use of Romanian People's Schools* by D. Varna (1872), *The First Reading Book* (1875) and *The Second Reading Book* by Ioan Popescu (1875), *The Metric System* by Vasile Petri (1876) etc.

As for the teachers' qualification, realizing that in order to promote the culture of the Romanian people both enlightened priests and well-trained teachers were needed, in 1846 Şaguna extended the six-month "clerical course" from Sibiu to one year; in 1850, this course developed into the Theological-Pedagogical Institute. In 1853, a separate one-year "pedagogical department" was created for those who had completed four years of grammar school. In 1862, the courses were extended to two years, in 1879 to three years, and in 1907 to four years until 1919 when, following its separation from the theological department, the pedagogical department became the "Andrei Şaguna" Normal School. Besides these courses, the future Hunedoara teachers could also be trained at "Preparandia" in Arad (opened on 3/5 November 1812, with a length of study of 15 months, two years in 1814, three years from 1876; in 1876, the pedagogical and theological departments became one single "Diocesan Theological-Pedagogical Institute"), the pedagogical department in Caransebeş (created in 1874, as part of the local Theological Pedagogical Institute and offering two-year courses and four-year courses respectively from 1896) or the Romanian department of "Preparandia" in Deva (set up in 1870, and offering three-year courses) (Lazăr, 2002). Some graduates of grammar school or state school were also accepted as schoolteachers (provided they completed six-week summer courses in the main Transylvanian urban centers), priests and even countryside intellectuals; until 1918, the percentage of these substitute schoolteachers was high while the number of qualified teaching staff was much lower than the real needs of the Hunedoara county schools. A report for the 1883/1884 school year shows that of the 368 teachers, 93 were not qualified and 137 were substitute teachers.

Beginning with the year 1861, "The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and Romanian People's Culture" ("Astra") also played an essential role in supporting the Romanian confessional education. At the general meeting held at Băile Herculane in 1900, it was decided to increase the number of the Association's sections from three to five: literary, historical, natural and physical sciences, school and economic sections. The school section set out to study the state of the intra-Carpathian Romanian education, to encourage the scientific activity in the field of pedagogy, to offer courses for adults, etc. In 1909, it became compulsory for schoolteachers and teachers to function within this section, and other several aims were set: to unify school terminology, to write new textbooks and to organize systematic Romanian libraries. From 1914, the section constantly supported the tendencies to standardize the education on both sides of the

Carpathians; the terminology used in Romania also started to be used in the Romanian schools from Transylvania (Lupu, 2008).

There were, however, many dysfunctions, such as “the weaknesses of our schools” in Orăștie, reported on 24 January 1891 by the archiepiscopal vicar Ilarion Pușcariu from Sibiu to the local protopope Nicolae Popovici (1838-1895): “1. The parochial committees are not up to their task: in most places, they are trying to elude the law in what concerns the supervision of schools, granting exemptions from the obligation of attending school in order to gain popularity. As proof, it is hereby submitted a report on exemptions in Vinerea; 2. There are no school buildings, as is the case in Pișchinți, where the school had to be closed down; here, the people do not make any contributions at all for the school; 3. In Binținți [now Aurel Vlaicu, *author’s note*] no classes were held in November because the schoolteacher was unqualified and a drunkard; 4. Schoolteachers’ pay is quite meager, just a pittance, and that is why there is a shortage of schoolteachers; 5. There are no schoolteachers in Mărtinești, Tămășasa, Dâncu Mare, Măgura and Ocolîșu Mic”<sup>5</sup>. Urgent measures to remedy the situations were suggested.

### **The dawn of great changes**

The sanctioning of the union of Transylvania with Romania by the Act of Union of 1 December 1918 was a landmark in the history of Romanian confessional schools; the older grievance, i.e. to have an educational system in Romanian, was now possible. Neglected in the difficult years of the First World War, school resumed only at the beginning of 1919. The circular no. 104 dated 10 January 1919 and issued by the Archdiocesan Consistory of Sibiu requested that “our lower bodies, priests and schoolteachers, should regard as their most important and sacred duty the rehabilitation of the school buildings and the beginning of school education because in many of our village schools, built and supported with great sacrifices, there is no actual instruction and the children of our parishioners are left at the mercy of fate, lacking the light of knowledge, to their parents’ shame, to their detriment and the detriment of the whole nation”; the circular appealed to all the graduates from pedagogical schools to apply for the vacant positions, and the clerics were urged “to provide school instruction in all the communes where there were no schoolteachers with special training.” For the new 1919/1920 school year, which started on 1 October, a similar circular (no. 7067/1919) recommended that where there were no qualified teachers, substitute teachers should be accepted, and in case there were none, the priests themselves should act as substitute teachers; as schoolmasters, the priests were also in charge of replacing some subjects from the curriculum, namely Hungarian, History and Geography of Hungary with Romanian, History and Geography of Greater Romania. As a result, an ample campaign to renovate and extend the old school buildings and build new ones started in all the confessional schools as well as to supply them with the necessary textbooks, school supplies and teaching materials; for example, by the end of 1920, in the protopope’s district of Brad alone (Hunedoara county), more

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<sup>5</sup> National Archives of the County of Hunedoara, “Orăștie Orthodox Protopope’s Office” fund, 1/1891, ff. 1-2.

than 25 Orthodox schools had been renovated; other 14 Greek-Catholic schools had been renovated in Hațeg Country.

At first, despite the suggestions and modifications made by the Department of Cults and Public Education within Transylvania's Dirigent Council, both the legislation and the educational plans of the former Hungarian state schools were kept. It was only several years later that the textbooks and curriculum from the old Romania were introduced. This process was finalized by passing the "Primary Education Act" of 26 July 1924, which managed to achieve the standardization of the Romanian education system. The former confessional schools came under the patronage of the State, while the Orthodox Archiepiscopate of Sibiu was left with the former Saguna's grammar schools in Brasov and Brad, now transformed into secondary schools (high schools) (Păcurariu, 2008). According to a circular issued by metropolitan bishop Nicolae Bălan on 28 December 1923, "the parishes where there are schools that no longer serve the purpose of instruction, [because] either new schools were built or they became unoccupied after the opening of the local state school, such old buildings are to become cultural houses and their maintenance is in the charge of the parochial bodies" (Vânătoru, 2008). Other school buildings were rented out to communes and the new state schools would occupy them; the modest sums of money were left in a local fund intended to improve the taking over action. In 1948, all the buildings were nationalized<sup>6</sup>.

### Final considerations

As it can be easily seen from the brief references mentioned above, under the guise of organizing and stimulating the educational process, the Romanian confessional education from Transylvania (until after the Great Union under the patronage of the two Transylvanian Churches, the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic ones) received repeated harsh blows. However, despite such denationalizing attempts promoted through school, the period of 1867-1918 was an essential stage in the development of today's educational system.

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<sup>6</sup> D. Barna, *op. cit.*, pp. 756-757.

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**Florin Josif Dobrej** is born in 1978 in Deva. He studied theology (1998-2002) and history (2003-2008) in Sibiu, where he obtained an MA and PhD degree, having defended his doctoral dissertation at the Theological Faculty in 2008, in the field of the History of Romanian Orthodox Church. He became a doctor of theology on Oct 20<sup>th</sup> 2009. He obtained the title of an Assistant (2004-2009), and Assistant Professor (since 2009) at the *Orthodox Didactic Theory* department in Karansebes at the *Efimije Murgu* University in Resica. He has been a teacher-associate at the Faculty for Literature, History and Theology at University de West in Timisoara.